The Time Has Come to Refit Your Boat, and Lo,

By Ginnie Beardsley

THE TIME HAS PASSED

WHAT a glorious, carefree feeling to skim like a flying fish over the deep green waters of Saanich Inlet, Sansum Narrows, Trincomali Channel, Captain Passage or Plumper Sound!

With your picnic and swim suit aboard, you're lord of all you survey, with no traffic to hold you up, no Sunday drivers to scare the daylights out of you—It must be wonderful to be a boat owner.

It is. Except for the time when the boat stops being your magnificent sea-charger and becomes your dry-docked slave-driver. Every year we swear solemnly that this time we will use the bad winter weather to get all the boat work done, so we'll be ready to hop aboard and go the first fine sunny day. And what happens? The same things that are happening this year. We keep finding excuses — oh, not consciously mind you. We did actually get off to a good start. The engine went in for its medical in November. The Djin really did come ashore before we went away for Christmas, just as we planned.

From there on, it was a case of the best laid plans of mice and men. We would do the necessary carpentry repairs ourselves; it would give us an excuse for a breath of air on winter weekends. What happened? The minor repairs turned out to be not so minor. The varnish which had looked so pretty on the cabin turned out to be no protection against the prevailing south-west winds, and one whole side had to be replaced. What did we do? Why paid someone else to do it.

February had practically drizzled to an end by the time we roped a couple of unsuspecting friends into helping us convey the Djin from the carpentry site to a handy spot near our house where we could supplement ou muscles with a few simple power tools and get ready to paint. The boat was strategically located on an old trailer at the end of a good roadway of gravel, slush and water. She was nose down and full of water which had to be drained into the stern and removed before operation transport could begin. Have you ever used the handy, built-in siphon (your mouth) for removing bilgewater from a boat? Nothing can duplicate that flavor!

The car got stuck three times on the way in to pick up her tow. Finally with everything in position (the old trailer wired to the bumper of the car, and wedges stuck in at strategic spots to keep the trailer's rollers from punching holes in the hull of the Djin), the most intrepid driver of the group took a flying run at the mud while

This is a process known as sanding. That comes before the paint.

the rest of us closed our eyes and shuddered. But he made it. If he had paused even once, we'd still have been digging.

The next problem in navigation was about a mile or two of road winding like a rabbit trail through the woods and badly pot-holed from travel of heavy construction equipment. After replacing the wedges which had bounced out, we made a caravan of this leg of the journey: the car, the boat, and a runner behind to make sure there was no shift in cargo. Thanks to these precautions, the trip was made with only about 15 stops to replace the wedges.

With her nose on a big log and her stern on a dolly (which I hope our neighbor is in no hurry for), the Djin came to rest, and I do mean rest. She rested for about a month while we thought about what to do next, and has been resting ever since while we do everything but.

Being in the plating business, we might be expected to have chrome fittings that would dazzle the beholder into seeking the shelter of sunglasses. But such, alas, has not been the case. Like the proverbial shoemaker's children, our little boat fittings always get left and neglected in favor of customers' work, with the result that over the years our chocks and cleats look as if they'd spent most of their time being dragged along the bottom of the ocean. This year it's going to be different, though. Down to the shop the fittings have gone, and just as soon as no other jobs are wanted "yesterday," we'll brighten our boat with chrome, too.

There are several ways of removing paint and varnish. To get it off fibreglass, you need paint remover. And paint remover needs one addition to the easy directions on the can. It should say, "Mix with nine parts elbow grease." At first we left the plexiglass window in the front of the cabin while we paint-removed. This was a mistake. Like a lot of miracle materials, this clear, unbreakable substance is susceptible to surprise attack from various chemicals. A few drops of the mixture of remover and red paint fell like tears of blood on the windshield. This distinguished marking is with us for good, and will give the impression of a dramatic escape from danger.

And then there's fibreglass itself. This has a sneaky way of cracking at the seams between boards and peeling off in little patches like sunburnt skin, leaving you wondering whether you should burn the whole thing off with a blow-torch.

One of the interesting things about being a boat owner is that you are forever changing your mind about exactly what you expect of your seagoing craft. If you start out expecting all the facilities of the Queen Mary or a 16-footer, revisions are sure to follow as you knock out partitions you find you don't want after all. This leads to a slight re-arrangement of steering, probably to some changes in the ports and certainly to an entirely new canvas cover design.

"What fun it must be to have your own boat—not a care in the world!"

Not a care — except that we'll probably still be painting by the end of the Victoria Day weekend, when everybody else is driving out in the country to visit friends who live by the beach!

LIGHTHEARTED LAND . . . OF MUSIC and LEISURE

AUSTRIA RESURGENT

EASTERN AUSTRIA bears scars of the war and postwar occupation, but it remains the lighthearted land of Mozart and Strauss while swinging toward recovery.

Almost four years have passed since Burgenland and Lower Austria, in the former Russian zone of occupation, regained their freedom. In an article entitled "Building a New Austria" in the February National Geographic Magazine, the late assistant editor Beverley M. Bowie reported that the Austrians are reassuringly Austrian.

"Today we work more and faster than before," he was told by Federal Chancellor Julius Raab, "and enthusiasm for things technical has certainly captured our youth. But we still have the same love for music, for a good book, for leisurely get-togethers. All in all, I'd say we have become a little Americanized by day. But in the evening we are Austrians still!"

Austria's lovely old capital, Vienna, is rapidly re-creating itself. The city has not merely plugged the toothless gaps in her profile left by war; it has built more than 50,000 apartments since 1949. One fifth of the municipal budget goes into housing. In addition to skyscraper apartments, the city has new schools and kindergartens, express highways, underground street crossings, a large airport, hospitals, and railroad stations.

Historic Vienna is a city of grandeur, of vast palaces, of magnificent churches, of princely residents. "But it is also," Mr. Bowie wrote, "the home of old shops in the Schonlaterngasse (Street of the Beautiful Lantern), of madly crowded antique galleries run by noblewomen, of little upstairs chapels like that of St. Stanislaus Kostka—brilliant and prismatic as a Slovakian Easter egg."

As a great showcase of Baroque, a cradle of musical and medical genius, Vienna provides an embarrassment of riches for resident and visitor alike. For example, Mozart houses are many—perhaps, as someone suggested, because he couldn't pay the rent and had to keep moving.

The postwar Viennese has lost none of his love for good food and recreation. Mr. Bowie commented, "In fact one sometimes is persuaded that there is no pleasant or dramatic spot in the country which has not been visited by at least two Austrians, one of whom has turned to the other and said, 'Now wouldn't this be a wonderful place to put a restaurant?'"

At Semmering, Vienna's Alpine playground, the brooding slopes and ski lifts attract holiday-makers, summer and winter. Mr. Bowie described this scene: "Up and down a mountain in unbroken silence pass rows of sedate and solemn Viennese, like so many bourgeois angels on Jacob's ladder, the men, with briefcases athwart their laps, gazing stonily at the view, the women with fixed and comfortable smiles."

The hinterlands reflect Austria's confident mood. Farmers have raised their yield by 20 per cent over pre-war standards. Vehicle production has tripled; electric power and smelting of iron ore have quadrupled. Flow of petroleum from Lower Austria wells has shot up 50-fold.

Lower Austria, oddly enough, lies north of the Danube; it is a region of dark woods and shining castles. In Burgenland, the land flatterns perceptibly; beyond lies the windy Hungarian plain.